MARVEL COMICS
2099
X-MEN 2099
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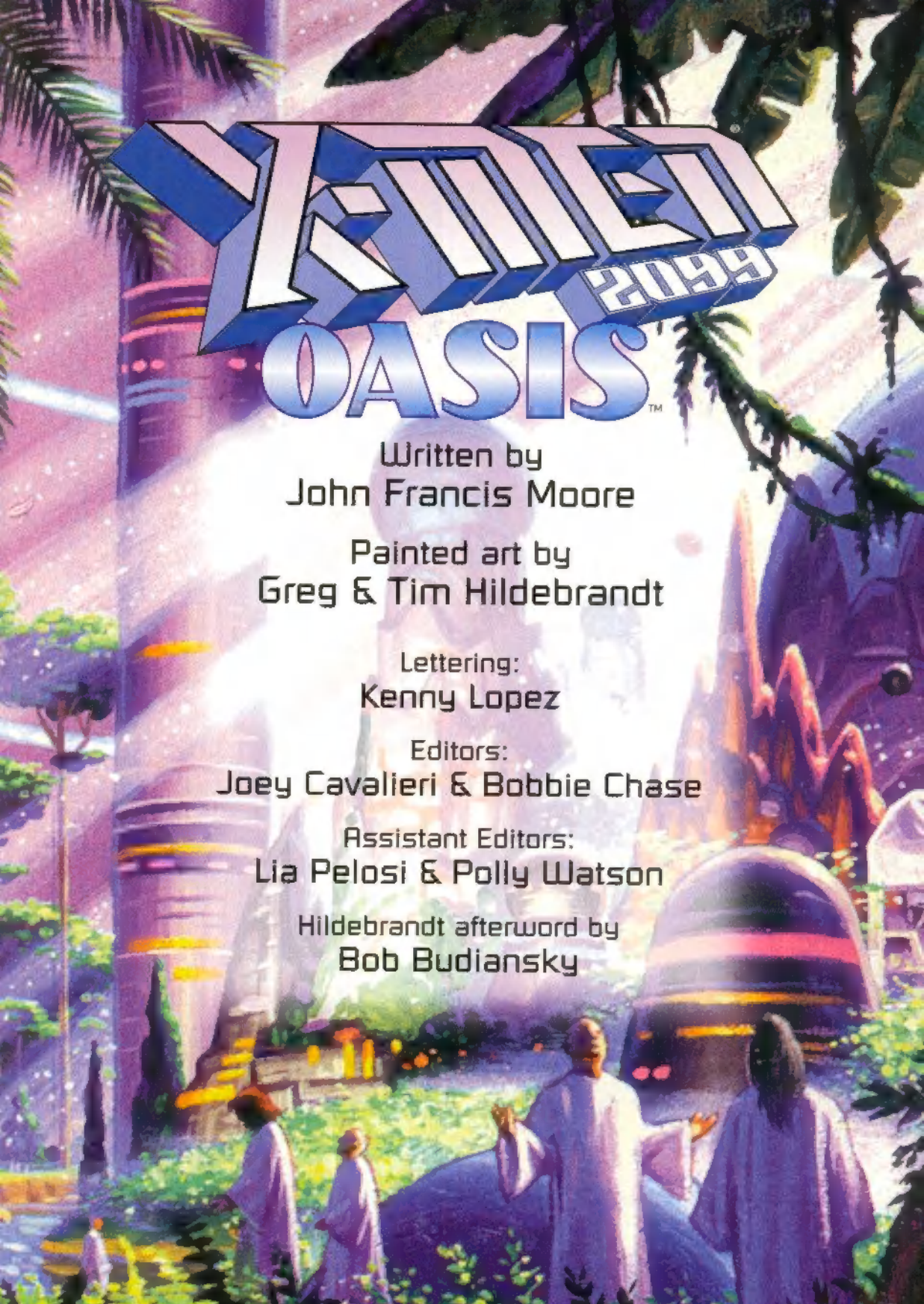
OASIS



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X-MEN 2099™: OASIS Vol. 1, No. 1, August, 1996. Published by MARVEL COMICS. Gerard Calabrese, President. Stan Lee, Publisher. OFFICE OF PUBLICATIONS 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK, NY 10016. Copyright © 1995 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved. Price $5.95 per copy in the U.S. and $8.35 in Canada. GST #R127032852. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. This periodical may not be sold except by authorized dealers and is sold subject to the condition that it shall not be sold or distributed with any part of its cover or markings removed, nor in mutilated condition. X-MEN 2099 (including all prominent characters featured in this issue and the distinctive likenesses thereof) is a trademark of MARVEL CHARACTERS, INC. ISBN# 0-7851-0234-5. Printed in the U.S.A. First Printing: June, 1996.

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HONG KONG, VICTORIA HARBOR, 2090.
SHE THOUGHT SHE COULD LOSE HERSELF. SHE HAD BEGUN TO FEEL SAFE IN HER ANONYMITY.
SHE SHOULD'VE KNOWN BETTER.
DOCTOR ZAIL HADDAD HAS THE WEALTH AND RESOURCES OF A SMALL NATION AT HIS COMMAND.
IT WAS MADNESS TO CROSS HIM SO PUBLICLY.
SHE'D BARELY ESCAPED HIS OPERATIVES IN PRAGUE, ISTANBUL, CHENAYA AND CASABLANCA.
IF ONLY I CAN REACH THE FERRY TO KOWLOON--
--I MIGHT BE ABLE TO DISAPPEAR IN THE BACK ALLEYS OF TSIMSHATSUI...

YOU MAY HAVE GOTTEN AWAY FROM ME IN MOROCCO, GIRL.
--BUT NOT EVEN A TEMPLE FULL OF TRUE BELIEVERS COULD KEEP ME OFF YOUR TRAIL.
LOKJAW!
THREE MONTHS PREVIOUS, SHE LED THE CYBORG INTO A MOSQUE OF THE TRUE HUMAN JIHAD--
--KNOWING THAT THE GENETIC FUNDAMENTALISTS WOULD TAKE VIOLENT OFFENSE--
--AT THE INTRUSION OF THE MECHANICALLY AUGMENTED TRACKER.
YOU ARE A DISAPPOINTMENT TO THOSE WHO HAVE INVESTED SO MUCH IN YOU.
YOU REPAY GENEROSITY WITH SPITE AND DISDAIN.
BECAUSE I REFUSE THE ROLE THE GREAT DOCTOR'S ASSIGNED ME?
BECAUSE I DARE TO LIVE MY OWN LIFE?
THE DOCTOR RAISED YOU TO RUN HIS BIO-SHORS. YOU SHOULD BE GRATEFUL TO YOUR FATHER, SHAKTI.
GRATEFUL?
MY FATHER MAY HAVE MADE HIS FORTUNE SELLING FLESH BY THE POUND--
--BUT I WANT NO PART OF HIM!

YOU HAVE NO CHOICE. RETURN HOME WITH ME.
NOT NOW--
WHUMP
--NOT EVER!
WILL I EVER BE FREE OF THIS?
WHHHHRRRRRRR
WETWARE INPUT OFFLINE.
AUTONOMOUS CPU BACKUP INITIATED
RETRIEVAL PROGRAM CONFIRMED SEARCHING SUBJECT: HADDAD, SHAKTI TARGET LOCATED.
UH OH.. I KNOCKED OUT THE HUMAN HALF OF THE CYBORG--
--BUT THE MECHANICAL HALF'S STILL RUNNING.

PURSUIT MODE ENGAGED
MY NEURAL PSI-BLAST CAN'T HELP ME AGAINST A COMPUTERIZED BRAIN.
I'M TRAPPED.
DO NOT RESIST. I AM AUTHORIZED TO USE FORCE IN YOUR APPREHEN--
SKRRRITCH
MAIN POWER CONDUIT SEVERED...
...FAILSAFES NOT RESPONDING...
...POWER CORE OVERHEATING...
...INTERNAL TEMPERATURE EXCEEDING ACCEPTABLE LEVELS...
SPLORSH
FSSSSS
DON'T WORRY. HE WON'T BE BOBBING TO THE SURFACE ANY TIME SOON.

RYU KOBOLT AT YOUR SERVICE.
YOU STOPPED LOKJAW WITH THAT BLADE?
A NECESSITY. AS YOU KNOW, YOU CAN'T REASON WITH THESE CORPORATE CYBORGS. THEY'RE PROGRAMMED TO BE STUBBORN.
BUT AT LEAST I UNDERSTAND HIS MOTIVATION. I HAVE NO CLUE AS TO YOURS.
MY EMPLOYER-- FENG HUANG IS AWARE OF YOUR CURRENT PLIGHT--
--AND HAS INSTRUCTED ME TO OFFER YOU ASYLUM HERE IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC.
FENG HUANG? THE SO-CALLED RED BIRD OF THE SOUTH?
WHAT DOES SHE GAIN BY HELPING ME?
SHE AND YOUR FATHER COMPETE IN THE INTERNATIONAL MARKET.
IT WILL ENRAGE HIM TO SEE HIS DAUGHTER GIVEN HAVEN BY A RIVAL HE CANNOT TOUCH.
A SMALL PSYCHOLOGICAL ADVANTAGE, BUT AN ADVANTAGE NONETHELESS.
I DON'T LIKE BEING ANYONE'S PAWN.
I PROMISE YOU ARE UNDER NO OBLIGATION IF YOU ACCEPT.
AREN'T YOU TIRED OF RUNNING?
YES.

NEW MEXICO, 2099
THE WINGED MUTANT BLOODHAWK SOARS TOWARD HIS DESERT HOME--
--UNAWARE THAT HE IS BEING WATCHED.
HE'S WITHIN RANGE, MEMPHIS-- AND HE'S MAGNIFICENT.
I SEE HIM FINE FROM HERE, PANDORA. I'M OLD, NOT BLIND.
WITH REGARD TO YOUR ADVANCED YEARS, PERHAPS I SHOULD GET THE IMPULSE CANNON--
LISTEN, MISSY, I APPRECIATE THE CONCERN--
--BUT I DON'T NEED YOU TO CUT MY FOOD OR HELP ME CROSS THE STREET.
MY AIM IS STILL TRUE.

KR-ZZZAKK!
AARRGH!
THE ARCHITECT WILL NOT BE PLEASED IF WE'VE DAMAGED OUR QUARRY.
NOTHIN' TO WORRY ABOUT WITH THIS ONE, SWEETHEART.
LOOK AT THE SCARS ON THAT BOY. HE'S SURVIVED WORSE.
UNGH...
WHAT DID I TELL YOU? HALF CONSCIOUS AND STILL KICKIN'.
LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE GONNA HAVE TO PUT HIM TO SLEEP.
DON'T FRET, PARTNER, WHEN YOU WAKE UP--
--IT'LL BE IN A BETTER WORLD.

LATER.
WHERE AM I?
THE PROMISED LAND, BROTHER.
A NEW WORLD IN WHICH THE SINS OF THE OLD WILL BE WASHED AWAY.
WHY AM I BOUND?!?
THE RESTRAINTS ARE FOR YOUR PROTECTION...
SAVE IT, PANDORA, YOU'RE NOT GONNA WIN THIS BOY OVER WITH WORDS.
HE DOESN'T TRUST ANYONE.
HE WILL TRUST ME --
--I CAN SOOTHE HIS ANGRY SOUL--
GET AWAY FROM--
HER SCENT IS INSIDIOUS AND INTOXICATES BLOODHAWK.
BECALMED, HIS BODY REVERTS BACK TO HUMAN FORM.
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO ME?

SHAKTI HADDAD, TIMOTHY FITZGERALD, AND THE WOMAN CALLED LA LUNATICA STOP OUTSIDE A GHOST TOWN NEAR THE KANSAS-COLORADO BORDER.
IT FEELS LIKE WE'VE BEEN CHASING THE WIND.
MAYBE YOUR SIXTH SENSE IS WRONG, SHAKTI. MAYBE OUR ELUSIVE FRIEND DOESN'T EVEN EXIST.
I'M NOT IMAGINING THIS, LUNA. HE'S HERE.
THE PRESENCE OF ANOTHER MUTANT TRIGGERS A RESPONSE LIKE A GEIGER COUNTER IN ME.
THOUGH HE'S KEPT OUT OF SIGHT, THIS MUTANT IS AS REAL AS YOU OR FITZGERALD.
OUR PAL'S LED US THROUGH TWO STATES--
--I HOPE HE'S WORTH THE EFFORT.
AFTER THE DEATH OF SO MANY IN THE SLAUGHTER-HOUSE--*
--IT'S IMPERATIVE THAT A LINK BETWEEN THE SURVIVING MUTANT POPULACE ■ ESTABLISHED
WE X-MEN HAVE TO MAKE THAT CONNECTION.
WELL, IF OUR MYSTERY MAN'S SOMEWHERE IN THIS ABANDONED CORPORATE SHANTYTOWN--
--WE HAVE A BETTER CHANCE OF SEARCHING FOR HIM SEPARATELY.
AGREED. BUT WATCH YOURSELVES--
--WE HAVEN'T DETERMINED WHETHER OR NOT OUR QUARRY EVEN WANTS TO BE FOUND.
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SOMEONE'S BEEN INSIDE RECENTLY
I KNOW YOUR SENSES ARE HEIGHTENED BUT HOW CAN YOU TELL?
I'M A HUNTER. I CAN SMELL BLOOD.
Y'KNOW-- I GREW UP IN A CORPORATE WORKERS' DORMITORY.
I ALWAYS WONDERED HOW THE EXECUTIVE CLASS LIVED.
BOOP
GOOD EVENING--
YOU HAVE ARRIVED FAR LATER THAN EXPECTED. DINNER WILL BE SERVED SHORTLY.
WHAT'S THAT?
I AM THE JARVIS 9000, MADAM. YOUR HOME'S HOLOGRAPHIC MAJOR DOMO.
GUESS THE PREVIOUS TENANTS FORGOT TO CUT THE POWER RESERVES WHEN THE COMPANY LEFT THIS DEVELOPMENT.
MAY I OFFER YOU THE AFTER-WORK STIMULANT OR RELAXANT OF YOUR CHOICE?
HE THINKS WE'RE THE OWNERS.
I COULD GET USED TO HAVING A DOMESTIC.
FACE IT, LUNA, THIS PLACE MAKES OUR HALO CITY CRIB LOOK LIKE A DUMP.

THOU HAST FOUND ME, O MINE ENEMY--
--BUT BLESSED BE THE PLASMA CHARGE THAT PROTECTS EZEKIEL BODDINGTON FROM EVIL MANIFEST.
THE LORD HATH BESTOWED UPON ME THE SPEED AND STEALTH REQUIRED TO FULFILL HIS HOLY MISSION--
--TO SMITE THE LEGION OF DEMONS WHICH DO SORELY PLAGUE THE LAND DURING THIS TIME OF TRIBULATION.
THAT SHOCKIN' HOLO DISTRACTED ME.
CHUNGK CHUNGK
PUT THE BOPGUN AWAY, ZEKE--
AIEEE!
-- BEFORE I TEACH YOU THE REAL MEANING OF TRIBULATION.
BRRZZAK
YOUR INFERNAL MAGICKS CANNOT COW ME, SATANSPAWN.
FOR I SHALL DESTROY YOU AND THE TEMPLE OF ABOMINATION WHENCE YOU CAME--

KRAK
SHUT UP!
IN LWEGO LAREDO, THE LOCALS NAMED HER LA LUNATICA.
--BUT THEIR DERISION SOON BECAME FEAR--
--WHEN THEY DISCOVERED THE GIRL HAD EXTRA-ORDINARY STRENGTH AND FERAL SAVAGERY TO MATCH.
THE LORD WILL NOT SUFFER THAT CONSTRUCT OF CORRUPTION TO STAND...
LET'S GO. NO WAY OL' ZEKE'S SHAKTI'S MUTANT.
HE'S JUST ANOTHER HOLY ROLLER SURVIVALIST.
WHAT DO YOU THINK HE MEANT BY SAYING WE'RE DEMONS FROM THE "TEMPLE OF ABOMINATION?"
WHO KNOWS? THESE APOCALYPSOIDS SEE DEMONS AT EVERY TURN--
--THEN AGAIN--
--WHO'S TO SAY THEY'RE WRONG?
THE WINDBORNE CREATURE SWEEPS PAST THE MUTANTS BELOW, SECURING THEIR ATTENTION--
--KNOWING THEY WILL FOLLOW.

NEARBY--
YOU'RE GETTING WARMER AND WARMER, SHAKTI HADDAD--
--YOU'RE PRACTICALLY RED HOT...
OKAY, YOU KNOW WHO I AM, BUT WHO ARE YOU? WHY HAVE YOU LED ME HERE?
THIS IS NOT YOUR FINAL DESTINATION...
...WILL YOU GO ALL THE WAY?
SWEET MOTHER, THAT CREATURE APPEARED OUT OF NOWHERE.
IT'S DEFINITELY THE MUTANT WE'VE BEEN TRACKING--
--BUT THERE'S SOMETHING ODD ABOUT HIS PRESENCE--
--SOMETHING INCOMPLETE.
I'VE COME THIS FAR. YOU'RE NOT GETTING AWAY FROM ME NOW.
VRROOOM

SHE IS OURS, ZEPHYR.
AND WHAT OF THE OTHERS WITH HER?
THEY ARE NOT OUR CONCERN. THE ARCHITECT WILL DECIDE THEIR FATE.
I DON'T LIKE THIS. THEY'RE TOYING WITH US.
HEY, HEY, SHAKTI-- LOOKS LIKE WE'VE HIT THE JACKPOT-- TWO FOR THE PRICE OF ONE.
THE PYRO-KINETIC HINTED WE'RE BEING LED SOMEPLACE SPECIFIC.
SINCE THEY'VE FINALLY SHOWN THEMSELVES, THAT PLACE MUST BE CLOSE AT HAND.
--DEAD ENDS.
SHAKTI, SLOW DOWN! THIS ROAD--
WE'VE LOST THEM.
NO.

WEIRD.
MY SATELLITE MAP SAYS THERE'S NOTHING IN FRONT OF US BUT WIDE OPEN PLAINS.
OR AM I THE ONLY ONE WHO SEES A CITY OUT THERE?
IT COULD BE ONE OF DOOM'S SECRET PROJECTS--
--HIDDEN FROM SATSWEEP BY A STEALTH FIELD.
NO IF OUR LATVERIAN PRESIDENT WANTED US HERE, HE WOULD'VE BEEN MORE DIRECT.
SO WHAT NOW?

THAT STRANGE PAIR HAS GONE TO GREAT LENGTHS TO LURE US HERE...
...LET'S NOT REFUSE THEIR INVITATION.
OKAY. JUST BECAUSE NO ONE'S STOPPED US FROM WALTZING IN THE FRONT DOOR--
--DOESN'T MEAN WE AREN'T WALKING HEADLONG INTO A TRAP.
GOOD. I'VE BEEN IN HALO CITY TOO LONG ALREADY. I WELCOME A CHALLENGE.
OUR ARRIVAL'S NO SECRET. THEY'RE EXPECTING US.
HAVE NO FEAR. THEY'LL BE TAKEN CARE OF.
THERE'S THE PROVERBIAL LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL.
BE ON YOUR GUARD.
SHAKTI, I WAS READY TO POWER UP IN CASE OF ATTACK--
--BUT NOW THAT SEEMS A LITTLE EXTREME.
WHEREVER WE ARE, IT'S BEAUTIFUL.
I'M AS SURPRISED AS YOU, TIMOTHY.
THE LAST THING I EXPECTED TO ENCOUNTER WAS A LUSH INDOOR GARDEN--
--WHERE I SENSE NO THREAT AT ALL.
IN FACT, THOSE PEOPLE SEEM OBLIVIOUS TO OUR PRESENCE.

IN FACT, I'M CERTAIN WE'RE BEING MONITORED.
AT LEAST SHE'S HERE. ZEPHYR AND INFERNO HAVE DONE WELL.
WHAT ABOUT THE OTHER TWO MUTANTS?
THE BIG GIRL LOOKS LIKE ONE OF THE THEATRE OF PAIN'S MORN--
--AND THE LONGHAIR'S A WALKING GENERATOR.

WELCOME TO THE OASIS, MY FRIENDS.
HUH?
BLOOD-HAWK?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? AND IN HUMAN FORM, NO LESS?
MY NEW FRIENDS, MEMPHIS AND PANDORA, BROUGHT ME TO THIS GLORIOUS HAVEN.
BE HONORED. YOU STAND AT THE CRUX OF HUMANITY'S SALVATION.
YOU DON'T SOUND LIKE YOURSELF, HAWK.
IN HIS TIME HERE, LEMUEL HAS CHANGED PROFOUNDLY.
HE IS NO LONGER A MISANTHROPIC OUTCAST DRIVEN BY RAGE. THE OASIS HAS GIVEN HIM PEACE.
LAST TIME BLOODHAWK AND I MET, HE SWORE TO RIP MY THROAT OUT.
NOW, I'M MORE AFRAID HE'LL HUG ME.
LEMUEL? THAT'S YOUR NAME? YOU'VE GOT TO BE KIDDING.
TWO MUTANTS LED US HERE-- AND I SENSE THAT YOU ARE ONE TOO. MEMPHIS.
IS EVERYONE IN THE OASIS A MUTANT?
NO, MA'AM, WE'VE GOT LAB RATS LIKE PANDORA, DYNASTICS, NORMS, EVEN A COUPLE OF CYBORGS.
BUT YOU SHOULD SAVE YOUR QUESTIONS FOR THE BIG MAN HIMSELF...

THE ARCHITECT.
GREETINGS, ONE AND ALL. I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU.
I APOLOGIZE FOR THE RATHER CRYPTIC MEANS OF BRINGING YOU TO THE OASIS--
--BUT I KNEW SHAKTI WOULD NOT IGNORE THE MYSTERY POSED BY ZEPHYR AND INFERNO
YOU SEEM TO KNOW A LOT ABOUT ME--BUT I'M AT A LOSS. WHO ARE YOU?
I'VE TAKEN GREAT PAINS TO KEEP THE OASIS'S CONSTRUCTION AND EXISTENCE SECRET--
--AND I COULD NOT RISK REVEALING MYSELF UNTIL WE WERE FACE TO FACE.
RYU KOBOLT!
OLDER, BUT ONE AND THE SAME
I THOUGHT YOU WERE DEAD.

I HAVE TO LEAVE.
BELIEVE ME, SHAKTI. I AM AS SURPRISED AS YOU THAT I AM NOT.
RYU, WHY DO YOU PUSH ME AWAY EVERY TIME WE GET CLOSE?
YOU CAN'T TELL ME YOU DON'T FEEL THE SAME WAY I DO.
SHAKTI, I'M SORRY... THERE'S NO FUTURE FOR US...
...I HAVE A RARE DEGENERATIVE DISEASE THAT IS SLOWLY CONSUMING MY BODY, DESTROYING MY NERVOUS SYSTEM.
FENG HUANG HAS LEGIONS OF THE MOST BRILLIANT DOCTORS IN HER EMPLOY.
THERE MUST BE SOMETHING THEY CAN DO.
THERE IS NO CURE.
RYU, WE CAN BEAT THIS TOGETHER. I KNOW WE CAN.
NO. I LEAVE HONG KONG TONIGHT.
YOU ARE AN INCREDIBLE WOMAN, SHAKTI HADDAD.
DON'T WASTE YOUR LOVE ON A DEAD MAN

I GRIEVED FOR YOU...
AND NOW TO FIND OUT YOU'RE ALIVE.
I MIGHT AS WELL HAVE BEEN DEAD THE NIGHT WE SAID GOODBYE.
WITHOUT YOU I HAD LOST ALL REASON TO LIVE.
IF NOT FOR MEMPHIS, I NEVER WOULD'VE FOUND MY WAY BACK.
AFTER I LEFT HONG KONG I WANDERED THE WORLD WEARING MY DEATH WISH ON MY SLEEVE.
"I ENDED UP ON HELLROCK, THAT TOXIC HELL HOLE OFF THE ATLANTIC COAST--
"--THE LONE HUMAN COMBATANT IN DEATHSTRYKE'S MUTROID ARENA.
"IF MY CHEMICALLY MUTATED OPPONENTS DIDN'T KILL ME, THE POISONED ATMOSPHERE SURELY WOULD.
"I WANTED TO DIE.
"FORTUNATELY FOR ME, MEMPHIS WAS THEN RUNNING BLACK MARKET TRADE TO THE ISLAND.
"A MUTANT WITH ENORMOUS ENVIRONMENTAL ADAPTABILITY--
"--MEMPHIS COULDN'T BE AFFECTED BY THE MUTAGENIC ETHER THAT TURNED MEN INTO MUTROIDS.

"MEMPHIS CONVINCED ME TO LEAVE THE ISLAND BEFORE I WAS IRREVOCABLY TRANSFORMED.
"IT ENRAGED THE MUTROID PROMOTERS WHOSE FREAKISH FIGHTERS I HAD KILLED.
"MEMPHIS KEPT THEM AT BAY WITH A WALL OF LIGHTNING, HIS SECOND MUTANT ABILITY.
IN TRUTH, IT WAS NOT THE MUTROID FROM WHOM HE REALLY SAVED ME.
HE SAVED ME FROM MYSELF.
SOON AFTER, I LEARNED THAT HE'D SURVIVED THE TERRIBLE CAMPS OF THE PURGE--
--WHERE THOUSANDS OF MUTANTS WERE INTERNED AND THEN KILLED.
THAT'S ENOUGH, RYU. THE NEW ARRIVALS DON'T WANT TO HEAR ABOUT ME...
YOU'RE TOO MODEST. WITHOUT YOU THE OASIS WOULDN'T EXIST.
YOU TAUGHT ME THAT THOUGH THE HORRORS OF THE WORLD MAY CAST A LONG SHADOW--WE CANNOT SURRENDER TO THE DARKNESS.
YOU SHOWED ME THAT HUMANITY COULD BE SAVED--IF GIVEN A SECOND CHANCE.

THUS WAS BORN THE OASIS--
"IN SECRECY I ASSEMBLED A DIVERSE GROUP OF VISIONARIES--SCIENTISTS, ENGINEERS, GENETICISTS--
--COMMITTED TO UNDOING THE MISTAKES OF THE PAST, AND BUILDING A BETTER FUTURE
"WITH THEIR RESOURCES AND EXPERTISE WE CREATED A SELF-SUSTAINING ENVIRONMENT--
"--DESIGNED TO HOUSE A COMMUNITY OF RACIALLY AND GENETICALLY DIVERSE MEN AND WOMEN.
"A GEOTHERMAL POWER STATION WILL SUPPLY THE OASIS WITH CLEAN ENERGY FOR CENTURIES.
"HYDROPONIC FARMS PRODUCE NONSYNTHETIC GRAIN AND VEGETABLES FREE FROM CHEMICAL CONTAMINATION.
"WE ARE PREPARED TO OUTLAST THE POLITICS AND STRIFE THAT ARE DESTROYING THE PRESENT."
RYU, I'M OVERWHELMED BUT--
BUT SKEPTICAL. I UNDERSTAND.
PLEASE, TAKE TIME AND LOOK AROUND. SEE ALL WE'VE ACCOMPLISHED THEN. I HOPE YOU'LL AGREE--
--YOU BELONG HERE

LATER.
A COMMUNITY OF MUTANTS, DEGENS, AND HUMANS, WORKING TOGETHER IN HARMONY?
THIS IS EVERYTHING THE X-MEN EVER HOPED TO ACCOMPLISH IN HALO CITY.
SO WHY DO I FEEL LIKE THIS MAGIC KINGDOM'S TOO GOOD TO ■ TRUE?
BECAUSE YOU KNOW HOW THE REAL WORLD WORKS.
NOTHING'S EVER WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE.
LET'S SEE IF WE CAN FIND THE DIRT UNDERNEATH THIS SPIT AND POLISH SURFACE.
BEEP
HMM, LOOKS LIKE THERE ARE SOME PLACES SHAKTI'S OLD FRIEND THE ARCHITECT DOESN'T WANT US TO GO.
PLEASE RESPECT THE BOUNDARIES DRAWN BY YOUR HOST
SINCE YOU ARE NOT YET CITIZENS OF THE OASIS, YOU CANNOT BE TRUSTED WITH ALL ITS INNER WORKINGS
HAWK, IS ALL THIS ON THE LEVEL?
YOU'RE THE LAST PERSON I'D EXPECT TO FIND IN A CONTAINED ENVIRONMENT.
THE ARCHITECT OFFERS THE ONLY HOPE FOR HUMANITY. I AM FORTUNATE TO ■ AT HIS SIDE.

WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR FIRE, BLOODHAWK? YOU USED TO BE A WARRIOR!
NOW ALL I SEE IS A SPINELESS AND WEAK SHADOW OF YOUR FORMER SELF. PATHETIC.
DO NOT TALK TO ME THAT WAY!
THAT'S BETTER. BRING IT ON, BIG BOY.
LEMUEL, CALM DOWN. SHE'S ONLY TRYING TO PROVOKE YOU. THERE'S NO NEED FOR VIOLENCE.
THE OUTSIDE WORLD HAS MADE THESE TWO HARD AND CYNICAL.
IF THEY FAIL TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE ARCHITECT'S GENEROSITY--
--NOTHING CAN BE DONE FOR THEM.
YOU... ARE... RIGHT... PANDORA...
WOW. SHE'S GOT HIM ON A LEASH.
NO. WITHOUT MY HEIGHTENED SENSES YOU WOULDN'T HAVE NOTICED BUT--
--WHEN SHE TOUCHED HIM, HER BODY SCENT CHANGED DRAMATICALLY.
--SHE'S GOT HIM UNDER SOME SORT OF PHEROMONAL CONTROL.
WE'D BETTER TELL SHAKTI THERE'S TROUBLE IN PARADISE.

YOU'RE UPSET. I UNDERSTAND.
DO YOU? TEN YEARS AGO, I THOUGHT THE MAN I LOVED WAS DEAD
I SWORE NO ONE WOULD EVER GET THAT CLOSE TO ME AGAIN. IT HURT TOO MUCH.
NOW, FROM OUT OF NOWHERE, YOU SHOW UP ALIVE AND SAY YOU KNOW HOW I FEEL?
UPSET? I'M ANGRY.
I NEVER MEANT TO HURT YOU, SHAKTI. I'VE THOUGHT OF YOU OFTEN.
THEN WHY DIDN'T YOU CONTACT ME, AND LET ME KNOW YOU'D FOUND A CURE?
BECAUSE I HAVEN'T FOUND ONE. THE DISEASE CONTINUES TO RAVAGE MY BODY.
MY RIGHT ARM AND BOTH LEGS WERE REPLACED WITH CYBER-NETICS--
--AND THE ARMOR I WEAR REGULATES MY DAMAGED NERVOUS SYSTEM.
I HAVE BOUGHT ONLY A FEW MORE YEARS--AND THOSE HAVE BEEN DEVOTED TO THE OASIS.
IT IS AN AMAZING ACCOMPLISHMENT, RYU-- --AND I AM GLAD TO SEE YOU AGAIN--
--BUT I CAN'T BE A PART OF THIS. MY LOYALTIES ARE TO THE X-MEN.

ONCE THE CLEANSING HAS BEEN COMPLETED, YOUR GROUP OF MUTANT ACTIVISTS WILL BE OBSOLETE
THE CITIZENS OF OASIS HERALD A NEW HUMANITY FREE OF RACIAL DISTINCTION.
THE CLEANSING? I DON'T LIKE THE SOUND OF THAT--
A NECESSARY STEP. THE EARTH CANNOT SUPPORT THE WEIGHT OF TEN BILLION PEOPLE
I'VE ARMED A HALF DOZEN HARBINGER OMEGA MISSILES WITH A SHORT-LIVED BUT LETHAL RETROVIRUS.
HERE IN THE OASIS, MY PEOPLE WILL BE SAFE FROM THE VIRUS. CRYOGENICALLY FROZEN IN THE SUBLEVELS--
--WHILE THEY SLEEP, THE EARTH WILL HAVE TIME TO HEAL FROM WOUNDS INFLICTED BY COMMERCE AND WARS.
I THINK YOUR DISEASE HAS AFFECTED YOUR BRAIN.
YOU CAN'T JUSTIFY GENOCIDE WITH ECOLOGICAL CONCERN.
WITHOUT IT, WE ARE A DOOMED SPECIES.
THIS IS MY LEGACY. A NEW START, UNFETTERED BY THE MISTAKES OF THE PAST.
WHATEVER WE MIGHT HAVE MEANT TO EACH OTHER IN THE PAST, RYU--
I CAN'T LET YOU DO THIS.
I HAD HOPED YOU WOULD UNDERSTAND--

--BUT IN MY MERCENARY DAYS I FACED ENOUGH TELEPATHIC TALENT--
--TO MAKE CERTAIN I DESIGNED PSI-DAMPERS IN MY ARMOR
LATER
IT PAINS ME TO DO THIS, SHAKTI. HAD THINGS BEEN DIFFERENT IN HONG KONG...
NO.. WHY DWELL ON WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN...
YOU JOIN A THOUSAND WHO HAVE ALREADY ENTERED THE SUSPENSION CHAMBERS.
DON'T WORRY. THIS ROOM HAS BEEN REINFORCED TO WITHSTAND NATURE'S WORST.
WHEN YOU AWAKE, YOU'LL SEE THAT I'M RIGHT.
GOODBYE, MY LOVE.
RYU... DON'T.. PLEASE.
SUSPENSION ACTIVATED. 350 YEARS

THE ATRIUM
PEOPLE ARE LOOKIN' FOR YOU, PARTNER.
HIGHEST PLACE IN THE OASIS. FIGURES
I NEEDED THE ALTITUDE. CAN'T THINK STRAIGHT WHEN I AM WITH PANDORA.
SHE SURE DOES HAVE THAT EFFECT ON MEN
MEMPHIS... I AM CONFUSED...
...DO I WANT TO BE HERE?
THE OASIS NEEDS YOU, HAWK.
YOU'RE TO BE ONE OF THE FATHERS OF THE NEW HUMANITY
I KNOW... PANDORA HAS TOLD ME THAT OVER AND OVER...
...BUT THERE ARE TIMES I FEEL...
CAGED...
MMMM, YEAH. I'VE BEEN THERE
SOMETIMES IT'S BETTER IF YOU DON'T THINK ABOUT IT...
I'VE NO LOVE FOR MANKIND. IT CONTINUES TO DESTROY AND DEFILE THE EARTH THAT NURTURES US ALL...
...BUT HOW CAN A VIRUS THAT DESTROYS INDISCRIMINATELY BE JUST?

I LIVED THROUGH THE PURGE, HAWK I DON'T BELIEVE JUSTICE EXISTS.
I WATCHED EVERYONE I EVER CARED ABOUT KILLED IN THE NAME OF RACIAL PURITY--
--IT'S AN OLD STORY-- AND ONE THAT'S BEEN REPEATED SINCE THE DAWN OF MAN.
MAYBE IT'S TIME THE HUMAN RACE WAS PUT OUT OF ITS SELF-INFLICTED MISERY.
AND YOU TRULY BELIEVE THE ARCHITECT'S PLAN WILL BREAK THE CYCLE?
I USED TO BE MORE CERTAIN... BUT NOW... I DON'T KNOW.
THERE YOU ARE, LEMUEL. I CAN'T LEAVE YOU FOR A SECOND WITHOUT YOU FLYING OFF SOMEWHERE.
HOWDY, 'DORA. MY, MY, DON'T YOU SMELL SWEET.
SAVE YOUR SARCASM, MEMPHIS. THE ARCHITECT WANTS YOU TO KNOW HE'S READY TO BEGIN THE FINAL STAGE.
THE LAST SHIFT HAS BEEN ORDERED TO THE SUSPENSION SUBLEVEL.
DON'T BE CAUGHT IN THE FALLOUT. EVEN YOU MIGHT NOT COME THROUGH THE CLEANSING ALIVE
I ALWAYS SURVIVE.
IT'S MY CURSE.

BEEP
ACCESS DENI--
SQUARRK
LET'S FIND OUT WHAT THE ARCHITECT'S HIDING BEHIND DOOR NUMBER ONE.
WHAT IS THIS PLACE?
BY CHANNELING BACK THE DOOR'S ELECTRIC CURRENT-- I CAN BYPASS THIS UNFRIENDLY LOCK.
CRYOGENIC SUSPENSION CYLINDERS. HUNDREDS OF THEM.
MOST OF THEM ARE OCCUPIED. NO WONDER HE DIDN'T WANT US TO SEE THIS.
THE ARCHITECTS PUTTING HIS FOLLOWERS ON ICE.
WE'VE GOT TO FIND SHAKTI NOW!
I BET HER LONG LOST BOYFRIEND DIDN'T TELL HER ABOUT THIS LUXURY ACCOMMODATION.
UNFORTUNATELY, I THINK SHE ALREADY KNOWS.

DISPLAY SAYS SHE'S ONLY BEEN UNDER TWENTY MINUTES--
--THERE'S STILL TIME TO THAW HER OUT.
I OFFER YOU MY HOSPITALITY, AND YOU BETRAY BY BREAKING AND ENTERING.
YOU ARE NO BETTER THAN STREET THIEVES. YOU ARE NOT WORTHY OF THE OASIS!
ZEPHYR! INFERNO! KRAGG! RESTRAIN THEM!
AS YOU COMMAND SIR.

BRRR... I'M NOT GETTING A PULSE...
...I'M GONNA TRY GIVING HER A LOW VOLTAGE SHOCK TO JUMP-START HER HOT--
WHOOOSH
A HURRICANE?
YOU WILL DO NOTHING, MUTANTS--
LOOK, HONEY, OUR SHY TRAVELING GUIDES HAVE FINALLY COME OUT OF HIDING TO SAY HELLO--
--AND THEY'VE BROUGHT A FRIEND.
I THINK I LIKED THESE GUYS BETTER WHEN THEY WERE OUT OF SIGHT--
CRUSH THEM. GRIND THEM. MASH THEM.

ZEPHYR MAY BE AS INSUBSTANTIAL AS THE WIND--
BBRRZZAAKK
--BUT LET'S SEE WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I CHARGE THE ATMOSPHERE AROUND HIM WITH ENERGY.
YOU'VE HURT ZEPHYR THIRD.. NOW KRAGG THIRD HURT YOU.
GET TOO CLOSE TO THE FLAME AND YOU GET BURNED, CRAZY ONE.
WHUKK
PAIN DOESN'T SCARE ME, SPARKY, SO TURN UP THE HEAT ALL YOU WANT--
--CAUSE ONCE I TOUCH YOU, I CAN TRIGGER ALL YOUR LONG-FORGOTTEN TRAUMAS BACK TO THE SURFACE--
ARRGHH... BY HURTING ONE OF US, SHE HURTS US ALL THROUGH OUR LINK--
UGH... HEAD ON FIRE NOW.. MUST GET INFERNO THIRD AWAY FROM WHITEHAIR--
--AND EVERY IOTA OF ANGUISH YOU FEEL MAKES ME THAT MUCH STRONGER.
NOOO.. WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO MY MIND..? YOU'RE A VAMPIRE...

REACH OUT MY BROTHERS--TO RESCUE OUR THIRD WE MUST MAKE THE CONNECTION--
--DIVIDED WE ARE ONLY FRACTIONS OF THE WHOLE--
VULNERABLE--
--TOGETHER WE ARE UNDIMINISHED-- UNSTOPPABLE--
WE ARE TRIUMVIRATE!
THEY'VE MELDED TOGETHER--
NO WONDER SHAKTI SAID SHE SENSED SOMETHING INCOMPLETE ABOUT ZEPHYR AND INFERNO.
THEY WERE ONLY TWO THIRDS OF THIS GIANT-SIZED BRUISER.
I FREED TRIUMVIRATE FROM A GENETIC CHOP SHOP IN MALAYSIA--
--WHERE EACH OF HIS COMPONENT IDENTITIES HAD BEEN FORCIBLY SEPARATED FOR CRUEL EXPERIMENTATION.

ONCE THE THIRDS REJOINED, HE LEVELED THE FACILITY--
--SLAUGHTERING THE DOCTORS AND MEDTECHS THAT HAD TORTURED HIM.
YOU HAVE NO CHANCE AGAINST HIS ELEMENTAL FURY.
YOU INVADED MY MIND, WOMAN. HURT ME.
NOW I WILL KILL YOU.
AN UNFORGIVING UNION OF FIRESTORM AND ARCTIC WIND ASSAULTS THE TWO X-MEN--
--WARPING THEIR SENSES WITH THE TEMPERATE EXTREMES OF AN ILL WIND BLOWING HOT AND COLD!
THESE SHORTSIGHTED FOOLS HAVE MADE THEIR CHOICE AND SEALED THEIR FATE.
FINISH THEM OFF!

YOU'LL DECIDE NO ONE'S FATE, ARCHITECT.
DID YOU THINK YOU AND YOUR SYCOPHANTS COULD HOLD ME HERE AGAINST MY WILL?
I WILL NOT BE AN ACCOMPLICE TO YOUR PLANNED ATROCITY.
HOW DARE YOU, BLOODHAWK?
HRRRKK--
KRASSH
SKKRRIPP
TOO COLD... EVEN FOR ME... CAN'T 'GNITE...
SSSSSSS
INGRATE--
I OFFER YOU A COMMUNITY, A HOME, AND YOU SPIT IN MY FACE.

RRWOOARGH!
I AM THE SALVATION OF MAN AND MUTANT!
I WILL NOT BE DEFIED!
ZZZAAAKKZZZ
THE MICROTHIN EDGE OF KOBOLT'S BLADE CUTS THROUGH BLOODHAWK'S LEATHERY SKIN--
--SIMULTANEOUSLY DELIVERING A SENSES-REELING VOLTAGE OF ELECTRICITY.
YOU'RE INSANE.
THE WORLD IS INSANE, BLOODHAWK. MY WAY WILL END THE MADNESS.
A PITY YOU WON'T LIVE TO SEE THE TRUTH OF MY WORDS.
NO, RYU! NO!!

HOW COULD YOU DO THIS?
HE CONDEMNED HIMSELF, SHAKTI.
I AM TOO CLOSE TO THE TIME OF CLEANSING TO TOLERATE ANY DISSENSION.
CAN'T YOU SEE THAT WHAT YOU'RE DOING IS IMMORAL?
YOU CAN'T BUILD A BETTER WORLD ON THE BODIES OF MILLIONS.
THEIR DEATHS INSURE THE HUMAN RACE'S SURVIVAL BEYOND THE NEXT MILLENNIUM.
PROBLEM WITH YOU, RYU, IS YOU'RE TOO SURE OF YOURSELF.
MEMPHIS? YOU DOUBT MY COMMITMENT?
FIRE THOSE HARBINGERS AND YOU DON'T BECOME HUMANITY'S SAVIOR-- YOU BECOME ITS DESTROYER.
THAT'S WHY I KAYOED PANDORA, AND FREED HAWK
SOMEONE'S GOTTA STOP YOU.
STUPID OLD MAN- YOU MAY HAVE LOST YOUR RESOLVE, BUT I HAVEN'T.
WITH THIS CONTROL, I WILL BEGIN THE FINAL COUNTDOWN.
SIZZHROOM
DON'T MAKE ME DO THIS...

WHY? MEMPHIS?
KLIK
URRHFF...
MEMPHIS'S BLAST DAMAGED RYU'S ARMOR--
--I HAVE TO HOPE THAT IT DAMAGED THE PSI-DAMPER--
--SO I CAN KNOCK HIM OUT BEFORE HE LETS GO OF THAT BUTTON.
TOO LATE SHAKTI... IT'S DONE.
IN MINUTES THE MISSILES WILL LAUNCH, AND THE RETROVIRUS WILL BE RELEASED.
I WANTED TO SAVE YOU.. WOULDN'T BE PARADISE WITHOUT YOU..
IF YOU EVER CARED ANYTHING ABOUT ME--
--TELL ME HOW TO STOP THE LAUNCH
YOU CAN'T... THE CLEANSING HAS BEGUN..

HAWK, I NEED YOU TO FLY ME TO THE MISSILE SILO.
I SAY YOU CAN. SO C'MON, PARTNER, WE DON'T HAVE TIME TO WASTE!
I DON'T KNOW IF I CAN FLY AFTER THE SHOCK OF THE ARCHITECT'S BLADE.
CAN YOU DISMANTLE THE WARHEADS?
NO, THAT'D TAKE TOO LONG.
I'M GOING TO DETONATE THEM BEFORE THEY LEAVE THE OASIS.
THAT'S SUICIDE.
FOR ME, MAYBE. YOU'LL HAVE A CHANCE T'GET OUT AND SEAL THE SILO HATCHES.
WHEN THE RETROVIRUS IS RELEASED IN THE SILO, I'LL TAKE MY CHANCES.
MY BODY ADAPTS TO HOSTILE ENVIRONMENTS.
I MIGHT COME OUT OF THIS SMILIN'.
HARBINGER

AND IF YOU DON'T?
NOW GET OUT OF HERE.
I'VE LIVED A LONG, LONG TIME. LONGEVITY'S NO BLESSING.
BESIDES, THIS IS MY RESPONSIBILITY.
SKKRAZZAK
I'VE GOT WORK TO DO.
BADDABOOM
BADDABOOM
BADDABOOM
DEAR LORD, IF YOU'RE OUT THERE--
I'VE MADE SOME MISTAKES IN MY LIFETIME--
--PLEASE LET ME SET THIS ONE RIGHT.

RRRUMMBLL
THE MISSILE EXPLOSIONS ARE TEARING THE OASIS APART AT THE FOUNDATIONS.
I'M MORE CONCERNED ABOUT OUTRUNNING THAT RETROVIRUS.
MEMPHIS TOLD HAWK THE SILOS WERE HERMETICALLY SEALED OFF FROM THE REST OF OASIS.
I HOPE HE'S RIGHT.
WHAT ABOUT THE PEOPLE FROZEN IN THE SUSPENSION CHAMBERS?
THERE'S NO WAY WE CAN GET THEM OUT BEFORE THE STRUCTURE COLLAPSES.
THEY WERE WILLING TO SACRIFICE THE REST OF THE WORLD FOR ONE EXCLUSIVELY THEIR OWN.
WHEN THEY AWAKE IN A COUPLE OF CENTURIES, THEY'RE DUE FOR A SURPRISE.
RRUUMMBLL
NO... MY PERFECT WORLD DESTROYED...
...THIS IS NOT HOW IT'S SUPPOSED TO END...

KRAKABADOOM
SO MUCH FOR PARADISE. GUESS THE OASIS TURNED OUT TO BE A MIRAGE.
TOO BAD. I WANTED TO BELIEVE THERE MIGHT BE SOMEWHERE FREE OF RACISM AND PREJUDICE.
YOU'RE DREAMING, LOVE. IT DOESN'T EXIST.
IT'S A DREAM WORTH HAVING.
AND EVEN IF RYU'S OBSESSION WARPED IT ALMOST BEYOND RECOGNITION--
IT'S STILL WORTH FIGHTING FOR.
The fate of the architect is the strangest of all. How often he expends his whole soul, his whole heart and passion, to produce buildings into which he himself may never enter.
--Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, 1808